



News from
State Senator Antoine Thompson

Chair, Senate Environmental Conservation Committee

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SENATOR ANTOINE THOMPSON: OPERATION SNUG PARTICIPANTS READY TO IMPLEMENT ANTI-VIOLENCE STRATEGIES TO CURB GUN VIOLENCE IN WNY

Buffalo, NY – Community groups in Buffalo and Niagara Falls are now able to spend funds designated for Operation SNUG (guns spelled backwards), an anti-gun violence initiative designed to bring greater community awareness to the random gun violence plaguing Western New York. Newly hired Operation SNUG workers recently returned from Chicago where they received training from Ceasefire, a national organization that works with community-based organizations to develop and implement strategies to reduce and prevent violence, particularly shootings and killings.

Operation SNUG funds, secured by State Senator Antoine M. Thompson (Parts of Erie and Niagara counties), have been allocated to People With Possibilities, North West Buffalo Community Center, WNY Regional Education Center for Economic Development, Community Action Organization of Erie County, Back to Basics Outreach Ministries and the Stop The Violence Coalition. Funding for this project totals \$500,000.

State Senator Antoine Thompson said, “The need for Operation SNUG to mobilize is urgent. Just yesterday, we saw yet another life taken by a gunman. In Buffalo alone, we have seen 36 out of the 48 homicides this year resulting from gun shots. There are countless more numbers of shooting victims that survived. Being able to bring state funds to our area is imperative if we want to curb gun violence.”

L. Nathan Hare, president & CEO, Community Action Organization of Erie County said, “The violence acceptance and expectation exhibited by an ever increasing percentage of our young does not emerge in a vacuum. Powerful forces and factors have been released in our society that have set in motion the replacement of instinctive values. Where children once sought to earn a place in our adult society, they increasingly now seek immediate self gratification only, and place no value on their own futures. Most of us know, almost intuitively, that violence, the striking out physically at someone to resolve conflict, is the behavior mechanism of the immature child, who has not learned the value, and expectation of verbal negotiation, patience, and the ultimate justice in the rule of legislative and common law. The simple truth is that we have failed as a community of adults to preserve the basic structures and norms within our society that give people a legitimate sense of expectation that their life is not on the line if they bump into someone on a bus or in a school corridor.”

The Reverend Tyrone Wilson, Operation SNUG program manager from The Stop the Violence Coalition said, “Operation SNUG will work to address the most pressing and immediate need of our clients through strong and persistent street intervention.”

(more)

OPERATION SNUG CONTINUED

Launched in West Garfield Park, one of the most violent communities in Chicago in 2000, CeaseFire was quick to produce results reducing shootings by 67 percent in its first year. The CeaseFire model, now utilized by Operation SNUG, is comprised of five components:

- Community Mobilization
- Youth Outreach
- Public Education
- Faith-based Leader Involvement
- Criminal Justice Participation

CeaseFire provides partners like Operation SNUG technical assistance and training services as a comprehensive package to meet their needs in the replication process and can include data analysis, site selection assistance, guidance on hiring credible messengers, staff training and systems and documentation for program monitoring and evaluation efforts.

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